

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 EUR-12 H-02 INR-10 IO-14

L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-05 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 /101 W

-----086097 221709Z /45

O 221636Z MAR 78

FM USMISSION USNATO

TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0174

AMEMBASSY BONN

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FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

1. FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED 22 MARCH 1978. BEGIN TEXT:

1. PROGRESS IN VIENNA ON DATA -- (A.N.-N.A.) - A
RELATIVELY LARGE DEGREE OF PROGRESS WAS MADE ON 16 MARCH AT THE VIENNA CONFERENCE ON THE REDUCTION OF FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE (MBFR). AT THE END OF THE 164TH PLENARY SESSION, A WESTERN SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THE EAST AND WEST HAD JUST EXCHANGED SUPPLEMENTARY DATA ON THE NUMBERS OF THEIR ARMIES IN THE REDUCTION ZONE IN QUESTION, THAT IS THE TERRITORY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, BENELUX, THE GDR, POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. NO ADDITIONAL DETAILS WERE SUPPLIED BY THE EAST AND WEST SPOKESMEN IN VIENNA.

2. AS IS GENERALLY KNOWN, THIS EXCHANGE HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR A LONG TIME. BUT THE TWO CAMPS WERE NOT ABLE TO
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REACH AN AGREEMENT ON THE FORMALITIES UNTIL LAST WEEK. THE EXCHANGE OF MORE DETAILED DATA WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE NEGOCIATORS TO FIND THE REASONS AS TO WHY THE OVERALL DATA WHICH THE PACT COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY SUBMITTED ON THEIR FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE (AIR AND LAND FORCES) IN 1976, AND THE NATO ESTIMATES OF THESE FORCES DID NOT TALLY. NATO ESTIMATED THAT AS REGARDS LAND FORCES,

THE PACT HAD 157,000 MORE MEN THAN IT HAD OFFICIALLY DECLARED.

3. FURTHERMORE, THE WEST CONSIDERED THAT IT WOULD BE INOPPORTUNE TO TABLE ITS NEW PROPOSAL (OF WEST GERMAN ORIGIN) FOR A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT AS LONG AS THE BASES FOR DISCUSSION, THAT IS, THE DATA, WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY CERTAIN.

4. ACCORDING TO WESTERN CIRCLES, THE EXCHANGE WHICH HAS JUST TAKEN PLACE PERTAINS SOLELY TO THE LAND FORCES OF THE TWO MILITARY ALLIANCES AND CONSTITUTES A MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE OVERALL FIGURES ALREADY EXCHANGED ON THE BASIS OF "MILITARY FORMATIONS". THE MORE DETAILED DATA ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS: (1) LARGE FORMATIONS (ARMY CORPS, ETC), (2) OTHER UNITS, AND (3) THE STAFF OF THE INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

5. THE OVERALL FIGURES ALREADY EXCHANGED PERTAIN TO THE FORCES STATIONED IN THE REDUCTION ZONE ON 1 JANUARY 1976. ALTHOUGH THE NEW FIGURES HAVE BEEN UPDATED (SAID TO PERTAIN TO FORCE LEVELS ON 1 JANUARY 1977) THERE SHOULD BE NO GREAT CHANGE IN THE OVERALL NUMBER.

6. THE NEGOCIATORS AT VIENNA NOW HAVE THREE WORKING WEEKS UNTIL THE END OF THE PRESENT ROUND (THE 14TH) ON UNCLASSIFIED

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21 APRIL, TO EXAMINE THESE ADDITIONAL FIGURES. IF THESE CLARIFY THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE EAST'S FIGURES AND THE WEST'S ESTIMATES, DISCUSSIONS CAN BE STARTED ON THE BASIC ELEMENTS, THAT IS, WITH A VIEW TO CONCLUDING A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT. NEVERTHELESS, SHOULD THESE ADDITIONAL FIGURES FAIL TO EXPLAIN THE DISPARITY - ACCORDING TO CERTAIN SOURCES, ADDED TOGETHER, THE DETAILED FIGURES OF THE PACT CORRESPOND WITH THEIR FORMER OVERALL FIGURES - SEVERAL MORE WEEKS OF WORK IN VIENNA COULD BE DEVOTED SOLELY TO DISCUSSING THE DATA.

7. THE WEST ALREADY WANTED TO PROCEED WITH THIS MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE DATA IN JULY 1977. WHILST ACCEPTING THE BROAD LINES OF THE NATO FORMULA, THAT IS THE THREE PART ANALYSIS, THE EAST HAD NEVERTHELESS INSISTED THAT TWO POINTS OF VIEW BE MODIFIED.

8. FIRSTLY, THE EAST WANTED TO INCLUDE AIR FORCES IN THE MORE DETAILED EXCHANGE OF FIGURES. NATO HAD NOT SUGGESTED THIS SO AS TO AVOID COMPLICATING THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE DATA. AFTER NOTING THE WEST HAD NO INTENTION OF GIVING IN ON THIS POINT, AND CONSIDERING THAT THE EAST IS NOT AT

PRESENT IN A POSITION, FOR TECHNICAL REASONS, TO SUPPLY THE DATA ON AIR FORCES, THE EAST HAS AGREED WITH THE WEST TO PROCEED WITH THE ANALYSIS OF AIR FORCES AT A LATER DATE.

9. SECONDLY, IN ITS STATEMENT OF LAST JULY, THE WEST RESERVED THE RIGHT FOR THE TWO ALLIANCES TO REQUEST EVEN MORE DETAILED FIGURES IF THE FIGURES WHICH HAVE JUST BEEN EXCHANGED DO NOT CLARIFY THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE FIRST OVERALL FIGURES. THE EAST DID NOT LIKE THIS IDEA, SINCE IT WAS FEARED IN THE USSR THAT BY SUPPLYING MORE AND MORE DETAILED FIGURES TO THE WEST, NATO WOULD HAVE A BETTER

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ACTION ACDA-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 /101 W
-----086088 221710Z /45

O 221636Z MAR 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0175
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IDEA OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE WARSAW PACT'S MILITARY FORCES. THE EAST WOULD NOW AGREE TO FURNISH SUPPLEMENTARY DETAILS ON FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE SHOULD IT BE PROVED NECESSARY.

10. THIS SMALL NEW BREAKTHROUGH AS REGARDS MBFR WAS WELCOMED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SATISFACTION IN NATO, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT CORRESPONDS WITH THE HOPES EXPRESSED BY THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS AT THEIR LAST NATO COUNCIL MEETING LAST DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO THE COUNCIL'S FINAL COMMUNIQUE, THE MINISTERS "STRESSED THE NEED FOR A GENUINE DATA DISCUSSION AS A BASIS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS IN THESE NEGOCIATIONS." CLAUSSEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TEXT, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USNATO03015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780126-0622
Format: TEL
From: USNATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780335/aaaabdhu.tel
Line Count: 165
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 56481fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3232457
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: \"ATLANTIC NEWS\" REPORT ON MBFR
TAGS: MARR, SOPN
To: MBFR VIENNA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/56481fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014